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INFO AMEMBASY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, QG, UK, IO, IR

SUBJ: PRESS FRONT PAGES DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION

SUMMARY. IN FRONT PAGE STORY PRESS CARRIED MOSCOW DATELINED ARTICLE ALLEGING EXPANSION DIEGO GARCIA NAVAL FACILITIES AIMED AT INTIMIDATING OIL NATIONS IN REGION. REPORTED AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER, WHO VISITING SINGAPORE, CRITICAL OF DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION PLANS AND THAT SINGAPORE'S FOREIGN MINISTER, VISITING IRAN, SEES STRAINED SITUATION IN INDIAN OCEAN CREATED BY EXPANSION OF SUPER POWERS' MILITARY PRESENCE. END SUMMARY

1. KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL, FEBRUARY 9, FRONT PAGED MOSCOW UPI DATELINED STORY CAPTIONED "U.S. ACCUSED OF INTIMIDATION". REFERRING TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A TASS NEWS AGENCY STORY OF FEBRUARY 7, ARTICLE STATES THAT TASS

HAS SUGGESTED US DECISION TO EXPAND DIEGO GARCIA NAVAL FACILITIES AIMED AT INTIMIDATING THE OIL RICH NATIONS IN THE REGION. TASS QUOTED AS SAYING "THE PENTAGON'S DECISION TO BUILD A POWERFUL NAVAL BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA INDEED CONTRADICTS SPIRIT OF THE TIMES". THIS SUGGESTS QUESTION, ACCORDING TO TASS, AS TO WHETHER THIS OPERATION IS NOT A SHOW OF STRENGTH FOR INDIAN OCEAN AND PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES WITH THEIR WEALTH OF OIL DEPOSITS.

2. SAME ARTICLE REPORTS BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY DOUGLAS-HOME, VISITING NAIROBI, ACCUSED INDIA OF APPLYING "DOUBLE STANDARD, IN PROTESTING US-BRITISH PLANS EXPAND MILITARY FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA. QUOTES DOUGLAS-HOME SAYING "NOBODY SQUEAKED" WHEN SOVIET UNION BUILT UP POWERFUL FLEET IN INDIAN OCEAN BUT "WHEN WE DO SOMETHING, THERE'S A SQUEAK." BRITAIN DID NOT INTEND TO COMPETE WITH SOVIET UNION BUT BRITISH OIL SUPPLIES PASS THROUGH INDIAN OCEAN AND "WE MUST SEE WHAT THE RUSSIANS ARE UP TO." POINTED OUT 25 SOVIET WARSHIPS ARE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WHILE "WE ARE PUTTING ONE OR TWO THERE".

3. IN SAME STORY IT REPORTED THAT AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM, VISITING SINGAPORE, EXPRESSED CRITICISM OF DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION PLANS. ACCORDING TO PRESS, WHITLAM STATED ANY BUILD-UP OF MILITARY FACILITIES IN INDIAN OCEAN OR INTRODUCTION OF MILITARY FORCES WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVEMENTS OF LONG TERM OBJECTIVE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE REGION.

4. FEBRUARY 7, SINGAPORE'S FOREIGN MINISTER, S. RAJARATNAM, AT THE END OF A FOUR-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO IRAN, COMMENTED TO THE PRESS THAT THE SUPER POWERS HAD CREATED A STRAINED SITUATION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN BY EXPANDING THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE. STATING THE INDIAN OCEAN BELONGED TO LITTORAL STATES AND ALL HUMANITY, THE PREMIER SAID DISTURBANCE OF PEACE AND STABILITY "HERE" WOULD BE A THREAT TO GLOBAL SECURITY. HE OPINED INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS HAD DEPRIVED WASHINGTON, LONDON AND MOSCOW OF THE ABILITY TO DETERMINE THE TREND IN GLOBAL POLITICS.

5. COMMENT: AS YET THERE NO EDITORIALIZING IN LOCAL PRESS OF DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION PLANS. PRESS FEBRUARY 6 CARRIED LONDON DATED LINE STORY CAPTIONED "US TO BUILD INDIAN OCEAN BASE" (JOURNAL), AND "US WILL BECOME A POWER IN INDIAN OCEAN" LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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